Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, 1937

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, Washington, D. C., September 30, 1937.

Hon. HENRY A. WALLACE,

Secretary of Agriculture.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: Herewith I submit a report of the work in the Office of Personnel for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1937. Sincerely yours,

W. W. STOCKBERGER, Director.

Personnel work in the Department is visualized as an activity the primary function of which is essentially one of service to the operating agencies. The individual worker is regarded as the critical factor conditioning the performance of functions for which the administrative officials in the operating agencies are responsible. It follows, therefore, that effective personnel work must go far beyond orderly procedures and record keeping. It must be concerned in the selection, placement, training, and promotion of employees, for their safety and welfare, and for whatever else will increase the satisfaction they derive from their work and contribute to the greatest efficiency obtainable from them.

The ever-widening scope of the activities of the Department with resultant responsibility in relation to the economic and social structure of the Nation emphasizes the need for systematic planning to develop the highest grade of executive and administrative personnel, to devise means for increasing the attractiveness of positions at the higher levels of authority and responsibility, and to check the flow of experienced personnel into industry and private activity which

inevitably occurs with every rising tide of prosperity.

The opportunity for a scientific approach to its problems is no less in personnel work than in the physical and biological sciences. Scientific studies of adequate personnel data should yield results of primary importance in determining the factors which condition the socially useful behavior of employees. Personnel research should be the guiding influence in shaping personnel policies, in the exploration of the motivation of our human resources, and in the direction of human effort toward the attainment of the objectives of our organization.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

There is a growing awareness of the importance of training within the service, and constructive training programs deserve the sympathetic support of all who are concerned for the improvement of performance and for raising the level of competence in the Department. Some of the more general aims of training are to acquaint new employees with the purpose and work of the agency in which they are employed, to increase skill in the performance of the work to which they are assigned, to discover employees fitted for advancement, and to prepare them to undertake more difficult or more responsible assignments of duties and responsibil-Fruitful results should follow wider acceptance of the dogma that the public interest will be enhanced through carefully planned programs of training designed to develop latent abilities of employees and to inculcate in them habits for continuing self-education. The formal or academic phases of training may well be left to the schools, colleges, and universities, and efforts focused on types of training designed (1) to increase proficiency in selected skills, and (2) to promote understanding of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objectives of specialized lines of work and an analysis of the concepts and objective object appreciation for the interrelationships which must be observed in fitting them into the frame of a major activity. Progress toward these ends would be materially hastened through the establishment of a central division of training to coordinate existing training work and to aid in the development of new and needed programs for additional training.

SAFETY WORK

Late in the year funds were authorized for safety work and the Division of Safety was accordingly established in this Office. The chief of this Division will make detailed studies of the accident problem in the Department, install a uniform system of recording and reporting accidental injuries to employees, and cooperate with the interdepartmental safety council and with representatives from each of the bureaus in the development of safety work in the Department.

APPOINTMENTS, SEPARATIONS, AND PROMOTIONS

There were 60,229 employees serving under formal appointment by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 30, 1937, as compared with 53,522 on June 30, 1936, or an increase of 6,707 during the fiscal year. The number of employees in the Soil Conservation Service was increased from 5,635 to 8,111 by June 30, 1937, a net gain of 2,476. The Resettlement Administration was transferred to the Department of Agriculture on January 1, 1937, and formal appointments were issued to the Washington personnel, which on June 30, 1937, numbered 2,329. A number of Emergency Conservation Corps workers in the various bureaus of the Department were given formal appointments during the year. The increase in the number of employees of the Forest Service holding appointments from 5,558 to 7,383, a net gain of 1,825, was largely due to these E. C. W. appointments. The increase in the Soil Conservation Service, the addition of the Resettlement Administration and the formal appointments of a large number of E. C. W. employees, accounts for practically all the gain in the personnel of the Department during the year. It is interesting to note that on June 30, 1932, there were 27,350 persons holding formal appointments in the Department of Agriculture, as compared with 60,229 on June 30, 1937.

The personnel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was decreased from 5,493 as of June 30, 1936, to 4,394 by June 30, 1937, a reduction of 1,099.

There were 16,447 employees in the field service of the Resettlement Administration on June 30, 1937, but these figures are not included in the computations because these employees did not hold formal appointments by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Personnel data for the last 5 years are shown in table 1.

Table 1.—Personnel activities of the Department of Agriculture, 1933–37

Year ended June 30	Employ	yees on roll partment	s of De-		Employ- ees ap- pointed	Separa- tions from the Depart- ment
	Depart- mental service	Field service	Total	Field stations		
1933	5, 521 10, 032 11, 437 11, 382 10 13, 371	1 21, 023 1 28, 591 4 32, 643 7 42, 140 11 46, 858	26, 544 38, 623 44, 080 53, 522 60, 229	1, 451 1, 451 1, 864 1, 864 2, 924	3, 915 2 31, 434 5 29, 092 8 30, 634 12 34, 561	4, 721 3 19, 355 6 23, 635 9 21, 192 13 27, 854

- ¹ Includes 80 in Foreign Service.
- Includes 80 in Foreign Service.
 Includes 11,667 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.
 Includes 6,647 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.
 Includes 52 in Foreign Service.
 Includes 8,249 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.
 Includes 7,459 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

- 7 Includes 52 in Foreign Service.
 8 Includes 5,186 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.
 9 Includes 5,821 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.
 10 Includes 2,329 in Resettlement Administration.

- 11 Includes 88 in Foreign Service. 12 Includes 1,336 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration. 13 Includes 2,435 in Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

On June 30, 1937, there were 1,634 collaborators serving without compensation who are not included in table 1.

The turn-over of permanent employees during the year was 5.12 percent, as compared with 6.88 percent during the preceding year, 7.19 percent during 1935, 10.63 percent during 1934, and 3.88 percent during 1933.

During the year there were 11,960 promotions, as compared with 10,815 in 1936, and 3,764 in 1935. Promotions during 1935 were from grade to grade only, under the Economy Act of June 30, 1932, while in 1936 and 1937 administrative promotions or promotions within the grade were possible, and the number given for these fiscal years includes promotions both within the grade and from grade to grade.

RECORD OF LEAVE

Employees were allowed annual leave at the rate of 15 days for the full year in 1935, together with the leave accumulated from 1933 and 1934. Data are given in table 2 to show the distribution of the annual and sick leave used in Washington in the calendar year 1935. Men and women in Washington averaged 14.4 days annual leave, as compared with 11.9 days in 1934. Employees in the field averaged 11.4 days, as compared with 10.2 days in the previous year.

Table 2.—Distribution of employees in Washington according to number of days of annual and sick leave used, calendar year 1935

	Annua	al leave	Sick	leave		Annua	al leave	Sick leave	
Days taken (number)	Em- ploy- ees ¹	Total days taken	Em- ploy- ees 1	Total days taken	Days taken (number)	Em- ploy- ees ¹	Total days taken	Em- ploy- ees ¹	Total days taken
0	287 93 94 111 112 123 181 185 193 262 261 327 350	Number 0 93 188 333 448 615 1, 086 1, 295 1, 544 2, 358 2, 610 3, 597 4, 200 5, 993 8, 764 17, 190 10, 544	Number 1, 617 580 588 475 462 399 352 316 328 274 264 267 294 173 209 163 141	Number 0 580 1, 176 1, 425 1, 848 1, 995 2, 112 2, 212 2, 624 2, 466 2, 640 2, 937 3, 528 2, 249 2, 926 2, 445 2, 256	17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30 ² . Total	612 480 421 373 244 206 174 140 105 78 66 54	Number 10, 404 8, 640 7, 999 7, 460 5, 124 4, 532 4, 002 2, 625 2, 028 1, 782 1, 512 899 1, 488	Number 133 110 96 91 77 85 66 67 60 64 58 138 490 8, 502	Number 2, 261 1, 980 1, 824 1, 820 1, 617 1, 870 1, 495 1, 584 1, 675 1, 560 1, 728 1, 624 4, 002 14, 700 75, 159

1 Not including employees on temporary status who were not entitled to leave.

² 30 and over for annual leave only.

Average number of days annual leave, 14.4; average number of days of sick leave, 8.8.

The average sick leave used by employees in Washington in 1935 was 8.8 days, an increase of 1.3 days over 1934, and an increase of 1.2 days over the average for the previous 8 consecutive years. Only 5.8 percent of the employees took the maximum amount of sick leave. There were 1,741 employees who used more than 15 of the allowable 30 days of sick leave. The total number of days of sick leave taken by this group was 41,996. Hence 20.5 percent of the employees used 56 percent of the total sick leave taken.

In the field, where the limit of sick leave was 15 days, the average sick leave taken during 1935 was 2.7 days, as compared with the past 8-year average of 2.9 days. Ten and one-half percent of the employees in the field took 19,185 days of

sick leave and 89.5 percent used only 18,276 days.

During the calendar year 1935, 19 percent of the employees in Washington did not take any sick leave. In the field for the same year, only 5.2 percent took the maximum amount and 52 percent took none. The past 8-year average of employees taking the full amount of sick leave is 5.5 percent for Washington and 6 percent for the field; whereas 25 percent of the employees in Washington and 52 percent of the field force used no sick leave.

WORK INCIDENT TO APPOINTMENTS, TRANSFERS, AND PROMOTIONS

During the year, 760 formal applications for civil service positions were received from all sources and circulated throughout the Department, as compared with 413 during 1936.

It has always been the general policy of the Department of Agriculture to fill vacancies by promotion of employees in the service of the Department whenever possible; but on May 26, 1937, a procedure for carrying out this policy was placed in effect by the issuance of instructions to all bureaus and offices, with respect to the filling of permanent positions in Washington. The plan announced provided for the advertisement of vacancies on bulletin boards and the circularization of appropriate notices throughout the Department. During June, 24 vacancies were announced and 133 applications were received from employees. applications were forwarded for consideration to the office or offices where the vacancies existed. Notwithstanding the short time this procedure has been in operation, it has demonstrated its value in emphasizing the policy of filling vacancies from within the service.

Personnel matters which required contacts with the Civil Service Commission, and the procurement of authorities for personnel changes are shown in table 3.

Table 3.—Personnel changes in the Department of Agriculture, 1933-37

Item	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Certificates from register	74 27 108 69 94 66 6	1, 510 481 254 465 4, 848 4, 031 3 29	1, 648 416 910 220 740 1, 466 2 110	1, 948 481 1, 388 452 771 1 270 3 124	1, 425 442 2, 166 267 4, 700 941 7 65

¹ The material reduction in this item under previous years may be accounted for by the fact that the various bureaus and offices of the Department have been filling more or less temporary vancancies for duration of work by probationary appointments in which cases no extensions of temporary appointments are involved.

RETIREMENTS

During the year 43 employees in the professional service were retired, 29 because of reaching the age for retirement, 8 on account of disability, 4 having rend-

ered 30 or more years of service and retiring under the optional provision upon reaching the age 2 years earlier than the compulsory age limit, and 2 incident to reduction in force. The average annuity for the entire group was \$1,049.04.

In the subprofessional service 62 employees were retired, 31 on account of age, 20 because of disability, and 11 by optional retirement. The average annuity for this group was \$1,027.02. The 38 retirements in the clerical, administrative, and fiscal service included 14 on account of age, 20 because of disability, 3 by optional retirement, and 1 by reduction in force. The average annuity was optional retirement, and 1 by reduction in force. The average annuity was \$887.82. Of the 10 retirements in the custodial service, 4 were separated on account of age, 5 for disability, and 1 by optional retirement. In this group the average annuity was \$708.79.

The amount of annuity is based on salary and length of service. The minimum annuity granted was \$187.92. There are two types of annuity, either of which may be chosen by the employee. One is known as life annuity and provides for the payment to the employee's estate of the unexpended balance to his credit in the retirement fund, in the event of his death; the other is designated increased annuity with forfeiture; that is, upon the death of the employee the unexpended balance remains in the retirement fund. During the year, the largest life annuity was \$1,323.48, and the largest increased annuity with forfeiture was \$1,442.64.

Continuances in the service beyond retirement age were granted to a principal veterinarian in the Bureau of Animal Industry; a principal agronomist, a principal pathologist, and a senior pathologist in the Bureau of Plant Industry; a chief accountant and auditor in the Office of the Director of Finance; a senior forester in the Forest Service; and a regional law officer in the Office of the Solicitor.

There were 384 applications for service credit and 1,024 applications from employees separated from the service for refund of their retirement deductions were certified to the Civil Service Commission for adjudication. In addition, 3,302 master retirement record cards No. 2806 were completed and forwarded to the Civil Service Commission for employees who resigned, transferred to other establishments, or were separated for other reasons.

Figures showing the retirements for the last 5 years are given in table 4, and

the average annuities paid in the various groups are shown in table 5.

Table 4.—Number of employees retired, 1933-37

	Annu	nnuity retirements in class			Disability retirements in class				
Year ended June 30	Profes- sional	Sub- profes- sional	Clerical, administrative, and fiscal	Custo- dial	Profes- sional	Sub- profes- sional	Clerical, administrative, and fiscal	Custo- dial	Cases dis- posed of
1933	81 51 46 29 35	132 63 65 50 42	22 58 24 18 18	28 24 12 6 5	9 12 10 11 8	23 12 14 19 20	19 28 29 18 20	15 11 5 3 5	329 259 205 154 153

Table 5.—Averages of the annuities in the various groups, 1933-37

Group	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Professional and scientific	\$1, 114. 04	\$1, 102. 22	\$1, 039. 81	\$1, 068. 59	\$1, 049. 04
	1, 012. 91	946. 81	960. 08	990. 43	1, 027. 02
	963. 67	946. 83	826. 35	865. 08	887. 82
	695. 98	757. 72	728. 50	654. 05	708. 79

CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS

The classification staff operating under the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, has continued to review new positions and duty changes resulting from the growth and reorganization of the Washington service; has expanded its infor-mation and aid to a greater number of tentative classifications of field positions; has continued to keep up-to-date organization charts of the various bureaus and offices of the Department and has assisted the bureaus in formulating new organization plans; has developed an in-service training course on classification techniques; has begun the preparation of a field classification manual; has started special studies on occupational groups with accompanying cross-section charts; has personally inspected a greater number of field stations; has attended and participated in national personnel meetings; and has rendered direct and constant service and advice to the bureaus in preparing an increased number of job descriptions, charts, and related classification matters.

A total of 6,339 appointments and changes in status in Washington employees were acted upon during the past year. The number recorded is slightly less than for the preceding year because of the invalidation of portions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the subsequent decrease in personnel. This in a way was counterbalanced by the addition of the Resettlement Administration, formerly an independent agency. In addition many cases were reviewed and returned without action. The number does, however, reflect all cases that involve change in duties, or an appeal for reallocation. Each of these involves a careful job analysis. There is a marked decrease in the number of appeals, as more attention is given each year to the individual and group needs of the employees.

A summary of this activity, insofar as it relates to the personnel in Washington for the past 5 years, is given in table 6.

Table 6.—Appointments and changes in status of employees of the Department of Agriculture, 1933-37

Year ended June 30	Appoint- ments to new posi- tions	Changes in duties	Changes to vacan- cies	Appeals	Total
1933	246	143	104	5	498
1934	5, 561	1, 274	2, 329	15	9, 179
1935	1, 634	3, 315	3, 260	45	8, 254
1936	1, 905	3, 698	2, 145	45	7, 793
1937	911	4, 002	1, 403	23	6, 339

In addition to those shown in table 6, a large number of positions have been reviewed from the field service and tentative classifications assigned according to departmental standards. The volume of such transactions has been gradually reduced over the preceding year, as the reorganization of the Forest Service and the expansion of the Soil Conservation Service have now reached a near-normal level.

Individual and office surveys on duty assignments have been expanded during the past year, and have yielded data of value to the bureaus and to the central personnel office. Cross-section studies on grade levels, duty series for selected types of work, and special wage and occupational studies have been made as an aid in the solution of organization and salary problems. Data on wages and duties of unclassified positions have been accumulated. This information has helped in the solution of personnel problems, increased the efficiency of management through improved employee relations and morale, and resulted in financial savings to the bureaus. Studies have been made on certain lines of work and pay of non-Government employees operating under employee organizations, and the resulting recommendations have been of service in establishing fair and adequate wage scales for such workers.

Extensive inspections of field positions in the vicinity of Washington were undertaken and the foundations laid for maintaining standard wage and job assignments. Representative field offices of the Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service were visited in widely separated regions of the country and valuable classification information secured. Such inspections provide first-hand information that serves properly to evaluate the work performed, enables grade and salary adjustments to be made, encourages the employees, helps the supervisors with their more difficult cases, avoids duplication of work assignment, and provides material savings to the Department. Classification is primarily con-

cerned with perpetuating the principle of equal pay for equal work.

During the past year a 6-week group study instruction course was offered to those concerned with classification matters in the bureaus. This was well attended and helped to increase the interest in the services of classification to the

Department.

The staff is constantly called upon to render advice to bureau officials in questions of classification procedure, both in Washington and in the field. Trained assistants who are familiar with the entire Department structure conduct studies, visualize requirements, and render recommendations as to duty assignments, evaluation of responsibilities, job descriptions, job levels, wages, and related problems of organization. With the large number of employees in the field service, the materials collected from each field trip or office survey on wages, duties, and related facts are invaluable in maintaining fair and uniform standards of work and pay throughout the several agencies of the Department.

INVESTIGATIONS

During the year a total of 888 recommendations, most of which were for the imposition of disciplinary penalties on account of delinquency, misconduct, and fiscal and other irregularities, received consideration by the Division of Investigations. Eighty-seven personnel investigations and 22 miscellaneous investigations were conducted, and 3,580 Agricultural Adjustment Administration contracts were investigated.

A substantial number of the investigations resulted in the recovery of money due the Government from employees and others as a result of payments being made erroneously or of Government checks falling into the hands of persons other

than the payees.

It is highly desirable that personnel investigations, involving delinquency, misconduct, and fiscal and other irregularities on the part of employees, be conducted with as little delay as possible, in order that corrective measures may be promptly taken with a view to eliminating from the service dishonest or otherwise undesirable employees. Prompt handling and settlement of such cases result in removing suspicion from honest employees, strengthening morale, aiding in the maintenance of proper discipline, and eliminating waste and inefficiency, all of which are essential to effective administration, efficient service, and just treatment of employees.

Very little headway was possible during the year in periodical inspections of field stations, because of the demands made on time and personnel by requests for special investigations and because of the limited number of properly instructed and trained investigators available for this work. Only 14 such inspections were

made. It is believed that with an adequate number of properly trained investigators, well versed in fiscal procedure, regulations, etc., it would be possible to prevent a great many cases of fiscal and other irregularities and to discover others before they became well-established practices. Such a force of investigators would also be of material assistance to field officials in the varied and complicated fiscal operations with which they must deal from day to day.

The work of the year resulted in 964 separate personnel actions, as follows:

Suspension without pay pending investigation.	40
Preferment of formal charges	28
Dismissal as a result of formal charges	18
Reprimand by chief of bureau	
Reprimand by Secretary	
Reduction in grade and/or salary	
Reduction in grade and/or salary, and reprimand by Secretary	1
Reduction in grade and/or salary, reprimand by Secretary, and transfer	
Suspension without pay	
Suspension without pay and reprimand by Secretary	
Suspension without pay, reprimand by Secretary, and reduction in grade and/or salary	
Suspension without pay, reprimand by Secretary, and transfer.	ž
Suspension without pay, reprimand by Secretary, reduction in grade and/or salary, and transfer	<u>1</u>
Appointment terminated with prejudice	
Appointment terminated without prejudice.	379
Resignation accepted with prejudice	
Resignation accepted without prejudice	142
Action taken for other than disciplinary reasons.	
The state of the s	
Total	964

EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES

The interest and participation of the personnel in the numerous emplopee activities has continued unabated. The Welfare Association has rendered financial assistance to several activities which were not self-supporting, and also made possible the issuance of a new and attractively illustrated edition of the booklet describing employee activities, which was distributed throughout the Department.

These activities offer to employees opportunities in education, recreation, and amusement, facilitate the extension of acquaintance between different groups of

workers, and promote the development of departmental spirit.

